

World Geography

Chapter 26

West and Central Africa

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Section 1: The Sabel

Section 2: The Coastal Countries

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The Sahel



- **How were trade and learning important in the history of the Sahel?**
- **What environmental challenges face the Sahel today?**
- **What are the three main goals of the nations in the Sahel?**



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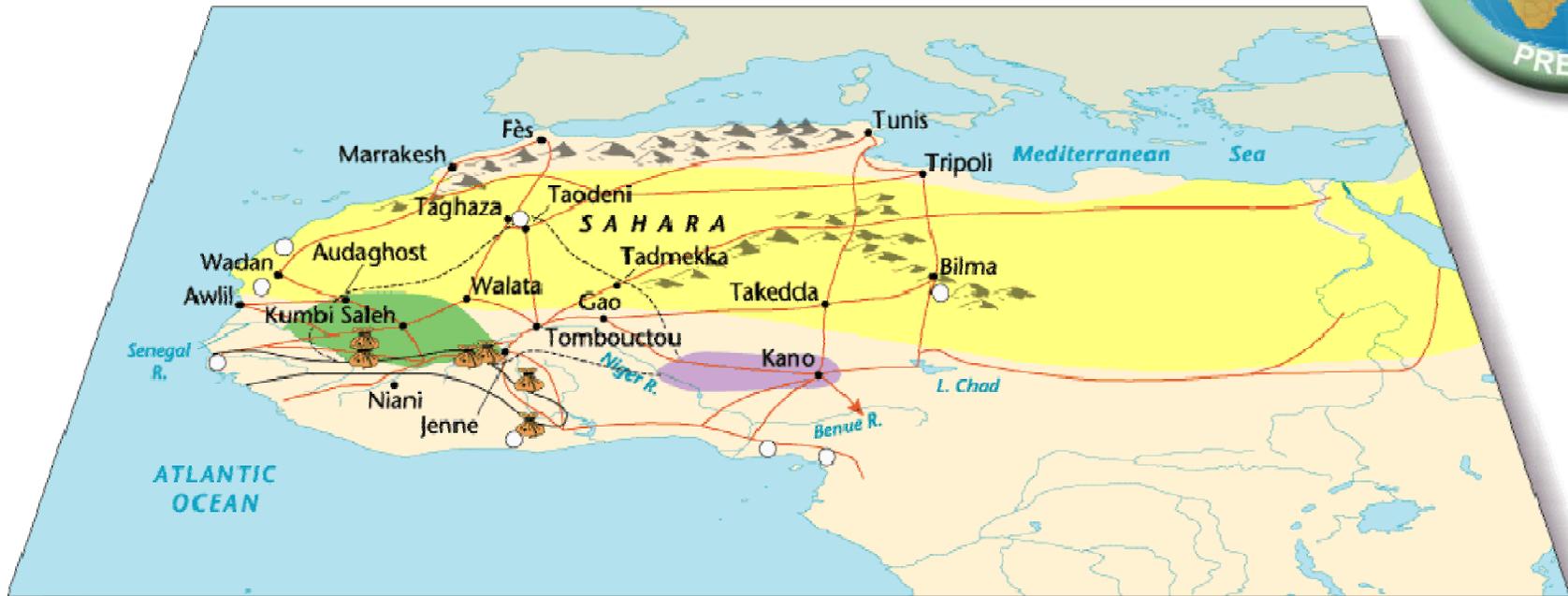
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Understanding the Past



KEY

Empire boundaries:		Resources:	
Ghana	Songhai	Gold	Trade routes
Mali	Hausa states	Salt	Desert



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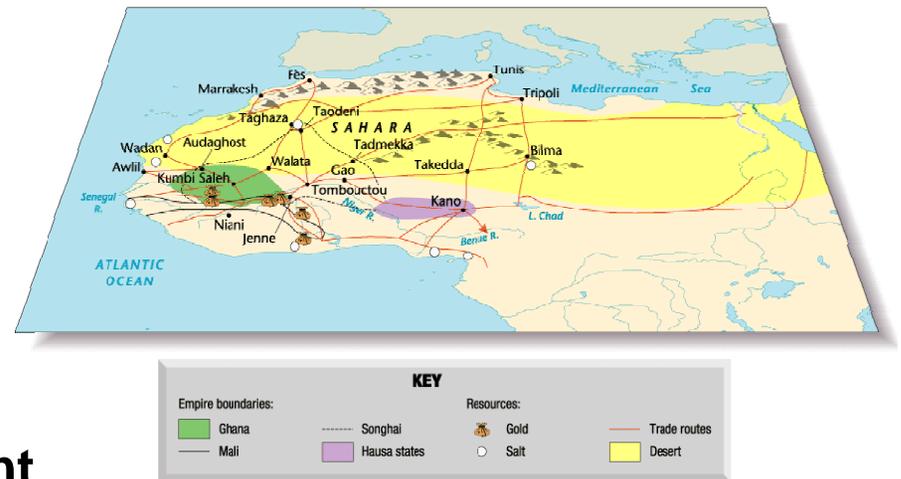
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Understanding the Past



- **Merchants traveled across the Sahara, trading salt for gold, ivory, and slaves.**
- **Taxes imposed on merchants brought wealth to chiefs in the Sahel, contributing to the rise of the kingdom of Ghana around A.D. 400.**
- **The capital of the Muslim empire of Mali, Tombouctou, was an important trading city and cultural center.**
- **Tombouctou reached the height of its intellectual influence under the Songhai Empire.**



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The Sahel Today



- Many people on the Sahel support themselves by farming.
- Farmers use **shifting agriculture**, in which a site is cleared, prepared, and used for a year or two until nutrients have been stripped from the soil.
- Instead of farming, many people herd camels, cattle, and sheep, and the low grasses and plants provide **forage**, or food for grazing animals.
- Overgrazing and **deforestation**, or the stripping of land of its trees, often leads to **desertification**, or the transformation of savanna into desert.
- When a drought hits the region, desertification increases and people flee to the cities, turning them into huge **refugee** camps.
- More developed nations have difficulty giving aid to the Sahel because the region is **landlocked**, or cut off from the sea.



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Planning for the Future



- **The Sahel countries have three major goals: adapting to the environment, developing natural resources, and encouraging human resources and culture.**
- **Foreign aid is needed in the form of food, medicine, and technical skills.**
- **The rivers of the region provide transportation and water for irrigation, and in Mali, the Niger River expands into an **inland delta**, or region of lakes, creeks, and swamps, where people grow crops.**
- **The Sahel also has mineral resources that can be sold for food.**
- **Many nations in Africa are struggling with repressive governments, but Mali has held free elections, and private companies are taking over state-run businesses and running them more efficiently.**



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Section 1 Review



How did merchants contribute to the growth of empires in the region?

- a) The merchants paid mercenaries to conquer lands in the region.**
- b) Local chiefs taxed merchants passing through the region.**
- c) Merchants served as a major part of the workforce, building monuments.**
- d) Merchants brought military technology from the Mediterranean.**

In their search for wood for fuel, how have people affected the Sahel?

- a) Because of the scarcity of wood, people have changed to other fuels.**
- b) Much of the region has been deforested.**
- c) Farmers plant trees to harvest later for wood.**
- d) People move frequently to find more trees.**

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Section 1 Review



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The Coastal Countries



- **In what ways has location encouraged the development of trade in the coastal countries of West Africa?**
- **How have power struggles affected West African nations since independence?**
- **What relationship exists between the traditional cultures of West African peoples and their countries' economies?**



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Location Leads to Trade



- **The coastal countries receive more rainfall than the Sahel, allowing more agriculture and the growth of valuable trees.**
- **The coastal location gives these countries access to the sea, and the natural harbors along the coast offer great opportunities to the developing countries of the region.**
- **The region attracted European traders from the 1400s, looking for gold, ivory, palm oil, and enslaved people to use as laborers, and this coastal trade made the Sahara trade less important.**
- **Today, nations of the West African coast export only a few products and raw materials.**
- **The economies of the region suffer because the value of their exports is less than the value of their imports, and they are heavily in debt.**



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Struggles for Power



- **Since independence, the economies of African countries were in weak condition, and few new governments have been able to overcome or recover from these economic burdens.**
- **Often, the military steps in and takes over, and sometimes different factions, or groups within the army, fight for power.**
- **Although several countries have replaced military leaders with elected governments, the political future of the region is uncertain.**
- **In 1996, free elections appeared to end years of political violence in Sierra Leone, but the government was overthrown in 1997, bringing the country to a state of anarchy.**
- **West Africans have learned that their governments alone cannot improve depressed economies, so they are beginning grass-roots efforts to change their economies.**



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Cultural Roles



Economic Opportunities

- Women in many West African countries are establishing agricultural cooperatives to improve the local economies.
- Women also run the markets where food is sold, and are expanding their cultural roles, becoming owners of small businesses.
- Children are valuable farmworkers.

Religion

- The Asante, like many African peoples, believe that if children respect and honor them after death, they will live on in the spirit world, a belief that is called **ancestor worship**.
- **Animism**, or the belief that ordinary things of nature all contain gods or spirits, is another aspect of Asante religion.

Population Growth

- Social customs, religious beliefs, and economic conditions translate into large families and a fast-growing population.
- The population of Africa is growing faster than any other population on earth.



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Section 2 Review



What made trade across the Sahara less important?

- a) Merchants found trade with central Africa more lucrative.
- b) West Africans on the coast could trade directly with Europeans.
- c) West African merchants became able to sail to the Mediterranean to trade.
- d) The value of West African exports declined.

What condition has sparked power struggles in West African countries?

- a) Economic weakness.
- b) Disagreements over healthcare and education.
- c) Frequent wars between countries.
- d) Religious conflict.

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Section 2 Review



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Nigeria



- **What characteristics define different regions in Nigeria?**
- **How has military leadership affected economic and political conditions in Nigeria?**



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Varying Regions



Nigeria's climate varies from coastal swamps and rain forests in the south to a large area of savanna and desert scrub in the north.

Patterns of Settlement

- **Historically, the most powerful groups took control of the most valuable land.**
- **The Yoruba settled in the south-west, the Ibo in the southeast, and the Hausa and Fulani controlled the most fertile areas in the north.**
- **Small, weak groups were left to crowd into the least fertile lands in the middle belt of the country.**
- **180 different languages are spoken in Nigeria, but English is the official language.**

Population Movement

- **Nigeria is fractured into Muslim and Christian populations.**
- **In 2000, nine of Nigeria's thirty-six states adopted Shariah, or Islamic law, in a move that reflects Nigeria's new democratic ideals but threatens its unity.**
- **Muslims are moving north into the Shariah states, and Christians are moving south.**
- **Religious conflict mars Nigeria's messy democracy.**



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Military Leadership



- **Nigeria's economy relies upon the sale of oil, and when the price of oil dropped in the 1980s, the economy broke down.**
- **When the economy was in shambles, the military staged a coup, brought corrupt former politicians to trial, and promised to correct old economic problems.**
- **Military rulers turned to the **World Bank** and **IMF** for aid, which required Nigeria to follow a **structural adjustment program** to borrow money.**
- **During the structural adjustment, the government sold state-run businesses, and did not allow wages or prices to rise.**
- **When elections began in 1993, a new military leader halted the elections and squashed all opposition, jailing and executing opponents.**
- **A new constitution was adopted, and free elections were held in 1999.**



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Section 3 Review



Which of the following has increased tensions in Nigeria?

- a) **Adoption of English as the official language.**
- b) **Control of the government by Yoruba politicians.**
- c) **Aid from international organizations.**
- d) **Adoption of Shariah by nine states in the north.**

What provoked a coup in Nigeria in the 1980s?

- a) **Violence between Christians and Muslims.**
- b) **Economic collapse caused by falling oil prices.**
- c) **The execution of political dissidents.**
- d) **Antigovernment riots.**

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Section 3 Review



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Central Africa



- **In what ways do the physical characteristics of Central Africa affect movement in the region?**
- **What kinds of renewable and nonrenewable resources exist in Central Africa?**
- **How has political turmoil affected the Democratic Republic of the Congo?**



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A Region Built by Movement



- **The Congo River system is a highway that provides food, water, and transportation for much of the region.**
- **Because cataracts block boat access to the sea from Kinshasa, goods have to be carried overland by railroad.**
- **The center of the region is dominated by a dense rain forest, which blocks travel through the area, but savanna stretches around it to the north, east, and south.**
- **Soil in both the forest and savanna is poor, and many people have migrated either to plantations on more fertile soil or to large cities.**
- **The railroad connection from Brazzaville also serves the inland nations of Chad and the Central African Republic.**
- **Many countries of West and Central Africa belong to an African financial community, called the CFA, that uses a common currency and promotes travel and trade between the countries of the region.**



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Diverse Natural Resources



Renewable Resources

- The rivers can provide hydroelectricity, as well as food and water, and deposits fresh soil on farmland, but only at a cost to farming and fishing downstream.
- The rain forests provide lumber and habitats for animal and plant species, and absorb carbon dioxide.
- Because planting new forests is expensive, Central African countries are trying to balance conservation and economic growth.

Nonrenewable Resources

- The larger Central African countries have huge mineral deposits.
- The Democratic Republic of the Congo has vast deposits of copper, cobalt, and diamonds within its borders.
- Once, it seemed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo would become an economic giant in the region, but like Nigeria it ran into economic and political troubles.



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Democratic Republic of the Congo



- **Within a week of gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, the military revolted and the southern province of Shaba declared itself the independent republic of Katanga.**
- **For four years the country was torn apart by civil war, until Mobutu Sese Seko established himself as dictator, changed the country's name to Zaire, and regained control of Katanga.**
- **By the early 1990s, Zaire owed foreign banks nearly 9 billion dollars, while Mobutu's personal wealth was estimated to be billions of dollars.**
- **Mobutu allowed elections in 1990, but refused to give up power, and people were reduced to **bartering** for needed goods.**
- **In 1997, Mobutu was overthrown, and civil war broke out as several opposition groups led uprisings against the government.**



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Section 4 Review



Why was the Democratic Republic of the Congo expected to become an economic giant?

- a) The country has a developed industrial base.
- b) The country has a large population of skilled workers.
- c) The country is situated at the center of trade routes.
- d) The country possesses vast mineral deposits.

What sparked the secession of Katanga?

- a) The seizure of power by Mobutu.
- b) The grant of independence by Belgium.
- c) Invasion by neighboring countries.
- d) The assassination of Laurent Kabila.

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